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Senate Majority Leader Sikkema Concerned About State Budget Trends

Sikkema: 'We cannot continue divesting from our future'

Lansing - Senate Majority Leader Ken Sikkema today said he is concerned about state budget trends that show a continuing shift of state dollars from higher education and revenue sharing to community health programs like Medicaid.

"We cannot continue divesting from our future," said Sikkema, R-Wyoming. "We have been pouring more and more money into community health programs and now the governor wants to start another billion-dollar healthcare program. We need to think about how to get off this path because it is not healthy for the state's future."

According to the nonpartisan Senate Fiscal Agency, state spending from state resources for community health programs has increased more than 45 percent during the past five years and spending on corrections has increased nearly 11 percent. In that same period, state spending on community colleges and universities has declined more than 11 percent while revenue sharing to cities has declined nearly 16 percent.

"The story of the state budget is simple: insatiable community health programs are gobbling up funding at the expense of everything else," Sikkema said. "The reality is that we need to deal with this right now - we can't afford to wait any longer."

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